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Margaret Munro.



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Yours Sincerely
Margaret - James.

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A CLUSTER OF THOUGHTS.

MARGARET MUNRO

(GILBERT GILLESPIE).

“A thought lay like a flower upon my heart,
And drew around it other thoughts like bees.”

E. B. Browning.

BLACKBURN:

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1908.

PR
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To

My Many Dear Friends

in the

Kingdom of Girlhood.

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Prelude.

*As I work amidst Life's busy throng
My heart breaks forth in happy song :
For even in the dusty street
Sometimes a pearl gleams at my feet,
Shining in radiant purity
To gladden the eyes of you and me.
And then, in loving talk, dear girls,
Though little you thought of giving pearls,
Like a dewdrop in the heart of a rose
They came to me; so I give back those
All threaded upon fair poesy's string
To prevent our treasures from scattering;
That in the happy hurrying years,
With duties and pleasures, hopes and fears,
Perchance, some day, with tender smile,
Conning these thoughts will an hour beguile,
Taking us back to the long ago,
Read in the light of the afterglow :
Like the scent of lavender from a drawer
As we turn our treasures o'er and o'er.*

A CLUSTER OF THOUGHTS.

The Threshold of Life.

Make life, death, and that vast for ever
One grand sweet song.

—KINGSLEY.

My school-days were over—I musing sat,
And felt both sad and glad together,
For the harbour is sheltered, and calm, and safe,
But out in the world comes stormy weather.

The cosy room, with its leaping fire,
Beguiled me to linger beside it;
And Fancy's steed came to visit me there,
And I needed no pressing to ride it.

I heard the world's voices that called outside—
The gay, bright world, with green paths winding;
With its music and laughter, sighs and tears,
And ways that sometimes seem past our finding.

And I felt afraid of those untried paths,
But then, I thought, with pulses bounding,
I had crossed Life's portals, must play my part
In the battle for Right, with trumpets sounding.

I roamed in thought among heroes and kings,
Politicians, philosophers, beauties;
With pleasures behind and joys still to come,
And the humdrum everyday duties.

Then the Angel of Gifts, me thought, drew near,
And whispered so low and sweetly—
“What would'st thou choose, O thou Child of Earth,
For the mystic hour will go fleetly?”

“Make me a David, with hearts for my harp,”
I answered, with earnest pleading,
“To fill my world with the music sweet
That all world-weary hearts are needing.

“To touch the heart-strings, and draw forth the best,
The truest, and noblest within them;
To reveal to our youth ideals of gold,
And inspire with desire to win them.”

“'Tis a precious gift,” the Angel said,
“And sweet is the Christ-thought behind it,
But it means thine own heart ever in tune,
With no selfish or hard thought to bind it.”

Was it a dream, or a vision indeed?
On my knee my book still lay open,
But the Angel's voice yet rang in my ears
As I pondered the words he had spoken.

Whate'er I may meet, my Father is near,
And the world is all His, and its fulness;
If I ask in faith for whatever I need,
There can never be dearth or dullness.

To Miss Nellie Pickop, on her leaving school.

What shall it Profit ?

'Twas in a garden of roses fair,
Whose dewy fragrance filled the air,
That a priceless soul was lost;
For that soul had heard a trumpet-call:
"Make now thy choice; but, ere leaving all,
Pause a while, and count the cost."

He paced the ranks of roses sweet,
With furrowed brow and wavering feet—
'Twas his Soul against the World—
Till o'er mountain tops and woodland dell
The gathering shades of evening fell,
The clouds their banners unfurled.

Still the battle raged for right or wrong;
He knew no time, though the night was long
Ere the heralds of the day,
The first faint streak, proclaimed the dawn.
All Nature stirred; the day was born.
His hour had passed away.

And evermore the scent of flowers
Remembrance brought of those fateful hours
'Mid silent witnesses there,
When gain was victor, and right lay low.
He had made his choice, for weal or woe,
Down among the roses fair.

Men wondered why at the festive board—
Where sparkling wit and red wine poured
Made life seem a merry jest—
His voice would falter, his eye grow dim,
For accusing angels seemed to him
What were roses to the rest.

And still as the golden years went by
A bitter drop was in each joy,
And an "undertone of pain"
Went moaning through the hillside trees,
And mingled with the summer breeze,
That marred the sweetest strain.

Where'er he turned there riches came,
And showered gifts, and even fame.
He knew what these baubles cost.
E'en when life was bright, and ill seemed good,
He sighed, "All this would I give, if I could,
To regain the soul I have lost."

So life sped on. Then at last—at last
The Angel of Death came riding past;
That summons he must obey.
And friends brought roses to deck his tomb
That filled the air with summer bloom,
As in silent state he lay.

In My Heart's Garden.

I paused to look into my heart one day
To see how my garden was growing,
Expecting to see such a sweet-scented crowd
All a-nodding to me and a-blowing.

But—where were they all? I had sown with care,
And at first had watered each morning,
Fair seedlings of Faith, of Hope, and of Love,
To be grown for my soul's adorning.

But cares and tares grew so fast, so tall,
For a while I'd neglected my garden,
And the withering frost of self had crept in
While the ground had been left to harden.

So the poor little shoots could not push through,
And they said, "Why, it cannot be time yet;
We shall only be killed, for frost is abroad,
All the hedges are white with his rime yet."

So when I looked in at my frost-bound heart
All my flowers were still a-sleeping;
But they were not dead—they stirred in their graves
As conscience set me a-weeping.

If we wish for the flowers of a beautiful life
There is need for watering and weeding;
With some meekness here, a sacrifice there,
The soil we must ever be feeding.

Then our flowers will flourish and sweetly scent
E'en the heart from which they are springing,
And so fair will they look to neighbourly eyes
That a song of their own they'll be singing.

"Apples of Gold."

Proverbs xxx., 11.

Dear, let your glad, sweet thoughts
Flow forth in speech;
Keep not the tender word
Till out of reach
The friend we love has gone.

But check the hasty word
That wounds and stings;
Pierce not another's heart,
For words have wings—
Their flight is ever on.

And like the little birds
Who carry seeds
Within their tiny beaks
To distant meads,
And leave them scattered there,
So words take thoughts abroad
To far and near,
Bearing their varied fruits
Of hope and fear,
Of joy, or grief and care.

Then, let us plant glad thoughts
In those around,
Remembering human hearts
Are holy ground,
And Time is fleeting fast,
That harvest-time comes soon,
And words and deeds
Have all their harvest, too,
Of flowers and weeds
When youth's seed-time is past.

A Stranger in a Strange Land.

He stood in the quiet street,
And on the alien air
The wild, sweet notes of his native land
Found homesick utterance there.

He was bent, but not with years,
And the instrument he bore
Too heavy seemed for childish hands—
With pity my heart was sore.

The fair-skinned children round
Mimicked his gestures wild
As the plaintive music rose and fell
From the throat of the weary child.

There seemed such a weight of woe
In the mournful, sad refrain,
Methought the air seemed full of tears
From a heart o'erfilled with pain.

The echoes of his song
Still haunt the quivering air.
Was it a song his mother sang
In that far-away land so fair?

And does she wait for him still
In the bright "sometime" of years?
Or has she passed down the silent way
That leads from this vale of tears?

Italia's skies are blue,
While ours are dull and grey,
And his heart is there, though here for bread
He must daily sing and play.

"Come ye Apart."

Come ye apart! and leave the thronging town,
Which man hath made a monument to him,
The flying shuttle and the clash of tongues,
And clouds of smoke that make the sky look dim.

Come ye apart! and rest the sluggish brain,
The hurrying streams of life unheeded go;
And let thine eyes, so tired with looking down,
Look on and up—thy weariness I know.

Come ye apart! from busy haunts of men,
Leave care behind and seek the higher things;
Pick up the threads of thought which often glowed
Through busy moments as on starry wings.

Come ye apart! to where the mountains tall
Uprear their "solid bastions" to the sky,
And hear the surges dash against the shore,
The plaintive music of the sea-bird's cry.

Sunset at Dunoon.

The heavens are leaning down towards the earth,
While sunset's rosy curtain hangs between;
The glory of the infinite shines through,
And visions e'en to mortal eyes are seen.
So may our thoughts and prayers arise,
Like holy incense, to the opened skies.

It is the hour of mystery and of awe,
A blood-red sun is mirrored in each wave;
Our yearning spirits seem to catch a glimpse
Of heavenly visitants beyond the grave:
And "Jacob's Ladder" did not hold
More blest assurance from the "Land of Gold."

The Messenger of Spring.

A little bird came twittering to me
On my casement-sill this morning,
And it sang me a song so full of glee
That of Spring it seemed the dawning.

It sang of the trees where the brooklets run,
With their branches hanging over,
And the flowers that caught the first kiss o' the sun
In the meadows so sweet with clover.

And the old mill lane with its sweet-briar hedge,
Where the lovers walk sedately;
And the pool so deep, with its tangled sedge,
The pool that was frozen lately.

The singer passed, but the song in my heart
Gilds all the day's rough weather,
Like music sweet in a crowded mart,
With the breezy scent of the heather.

The Gates of Eden.

When by the Angel led from Eden,
To expiate their sin,
Did all the beasts, I wonder, see them
Shut out, and they left in?

Did Eve's white hand, in farewell greeting,
And eyes o'er-brimmed with tears,
Rest for a moment on each favourite
With vain regrets and fears?

And did the birds, I wonder, flying,
Light on her shoulder fair,
With tender coo, and beak caressing
The glories of her hair?

I wonder if the dog came bounding,
With friendly look and wise,
And waving tail beside his master,
Affection in his eyes.

Did the horse come, with prancing footsteps,
With them to find a home?
With bold, free air the desert sniffing,
Yet no desire to roam?

Eve's little lamb would follow, bleating
To see her look so sad;
And Eve, perhaps, would clasp it to her:
Its love would make her glad.

They all would think the Garden lonely
Without that low, sweet voice,
And laughter rippling like a fountain,
All Nature to rejoice.

The large-eyed ox, in wonder standing,
Reflective and sedate,
Would follow on behind the others—
Content to share their fate.

So fared they forth—not unattended,
Not leaving all behind;
But by the animals befriended—
New scenes and joys to find.

My Queen.

Near velvet sward and gay paterre,
The stately lilies grow,
Bending with every passing breeze,
While near the roses glow

With radiant beauty's queenly dower
Of fragrance to delight
And charm the senses and the eye,
A happy dancing sprite.

But though so beautiful and bright,
With love and conscious pride,
The lily on its slender stem
Is sweeter than all beside.

And you, my dearest, seem to me,
In sweetness and in grace,
With heart of gold thrice purified,
And dainty lily face,

The Spirit of the Garden,
With graces drawn from all;
But your footsteps linger oftenest
Beside the lilies tall.

The Two Angels.

The Angel Sorrow looketh pale,
And yet is passing fair:
By the liquid sweetness of her smile
I should know her anywhere.

The Angel Sorrow looketh sad,
But a misty radiance lies
Like a golden halo round her head,
And in her starry eyes.

With looks of sweet compassion bent
On those who shrink away,
With fear and dread at her approach,
With faces drawn and grey.

Beside her stands another form,
With hair of brighter gold;
With radiant smile and outstretched hands
We welcomed her of old.

Both are God's Angels. Welcome both,
They come with crowns to you,
Straight from the Father's loving hands
To all His children true.

Twin sisters these, they cannot part:
Where Joy comes, Sorrow, too,
Will entrance find within your heart,
Bringing fair gifts to you.

Joy bringeth larger love and trust,
Till the whole world around
Is bathed in its refulgent glow,
And music's dulcet sound.

Sorrow brings patient faith and hope,
A more unselfish love,
A broader view, sweet sympathy,
Glimpses of things above.

She singeth sad, she singeth low,
But ah! so sweet is she,
I would not have her otherwise,
Even if that might be.

Those Eyes.

They haunt my waking dreams,
Those sad, pathetic eyes:
So hopeless, that no look nor word,
However kind or wise,

Has power to touch or move
That haunting look of woe;
Not even love itself has power
To bid this sorrow go.

If I could bring one look
Of gladness to those eyes,
Could I but see from sorrow's deeps
One gleam of hope arise:

I'd say, "I thank Thee, God;
I have not lived in vain,
If I have power to soothe
Or help another's pain."

Friends.

Dear Friend of mine! If I could give
You all you hoped or wished for here,
Be sure I would—nor make you wait
For what you hold so dear.

But yet—so foolish is my love—
Perchance it might but work you harm;
We have another Friend, more wise,
Whose love is deep and warm.

I'll say to Him, "Here is our friend,
Whose heart is sad, though staunch and true;
I long to give her all she needs,
So bring her unto You.

"You know what is her 'heart's desire,'
You love her more than even me;
And so we come to ask, dear Lord,
And here present our plea."

Dear Father-God, who knowest best:
Be it to sing or weep and sigh;
Grant we may feel, whate'er befall,
This refuge always nigh.

The Gadarenes.

The Master came, with His great heart of love,
And He brought them such rare and precious
gifts:

From the wretched maniac's clouded brain
All his weight of sorrow and sin he lifts.

And he, who was once a terror and shame
To his nearest and dearest, became once more
A man whom all might respect and love,
As in childhood's innocent days of yore.

But alas! for those whom Satan had bound,
With chains they fondly deemed were of gold,
For which they had given up all of their best,
The "laws of their fathers" no longer to hold.

Alas! for their hearts, grown withered and sere,
They wanted no jewels from Truth's rich mine;
No gifts from the Christ—they begged Him to go,
To go—but to leave them their golden swine.

So the Master turned and went away
With a saddened heart for their folly and sin:
That preferred earth's dross before Heaven's gold,
And Life Eternal at last to win.

But in infinite pity and infinite love
He left one witness to speak to them still:
When the maniac came and knelt at His feet,
He returned to his "home" at the Saviour's will.

Ah! let not the Gadarenes' choice be ours,
To cling to the low and reject the higher;
Let us greet Him with joy, not grovel with swine,
Where our pearls of thought must be trod in the mire.

My Choice.

If God some night should say to me,
As to the king of old,
"Choose thou what I should give to thee—
Long life, uncounted gold:

“ A merry heart that ever sings
Along life's broad highway,
That doeth good to all around,
And drives dull care away.

“ Beauty of mind, and face, and form,
That everyone must love;
A queen of hearts, with joy begirt,
Yet gentle as a dove.

“ Wisdom to think, and say, and do,
In the right time and place,
Just what is best, and kind, and wise,
All with a special grace.

“ A tender heart, that ever looks,
With wise and helpful gaze,
On other toilers up the hill,
And thro' life's stony ways.

“ An earthly love to wrap thee round,
To share thy woe or joy,
To stand between the stormy blast—
Pure love without alloy.

“ Companionship that brightens up,
And gilds the stony hill?”
Should I choose these? I cannot tell,
But leave it to His will.

Long life! Eternity to me
Opens its glorious door,
On perfect love and happiness—
What can I ask for more

Riches? All needful wealth is mine--

My Father holds it all,
And gives to me, just what I need,
A blessing great or small.

A merry heart? This, too, is mine;
I need not faint or fear;
E'en when the way seems dark and rough,
I know that He is near.

Wisdom? But not this world's I want,
'Tis foolishness with God;
I want the wisdom that endures
E'en when beneath the sod.

My worn-out body lies at rest;
My spirit, young and bright,
Has come into its kingdom fair,
In realms of endless light.

A loving heart? Lord, give me this;
Let not the world's hard crust
Enclose it round in icy calm—
Oh! Let not moth or rust

Corrupt my treasures. Keep them safe.
Dear Father, let them be
Where neither moth nor thief can come,
Laid up in Heaven with Thee.

A June Morning.

Listen! the birds are waking,
The scented silence breaking,
So wakes my heart to thee.

They sing among the rushes,
Coming in tuneful gushes;
So sings my heart to thee.

The flower its buds unfoldeth,
No more its sweets withholdeth;
So open, Love, to me.

As loosened leaves untwineth
When long the warm sun shineth,
I'll shine, dear one, for thee.

The streamlet's tuneful flowing,
Sweeter and sweeter growing,
Speaks back, my heart, to thee.

Sweet are the fields of clover,
With skies of blue arched over;
So sweet art thou to me.

Vain Regrets.

If I could only kiss you once, and tell you
How much I love you, dear;
If you could murmur just one word in answer,
It would not seem so hard to bear.

But you lie still beneath the rolling ocean,
While I am weeping here;
No tears of mine, or passionate emotion,
Can win you back to life, my dear.

Time is kind; they tell me time will soften
My anguish keen and deep;
It might be so, if I had only seen you,
And kissed you ere you fell asleep.

“The Valley of Baca.”

I entered in the gloomy Vale of Tears,
And other sombre forms came slowly by
With faces veiled, and heads down bent to earth
With weight of woe, which filled the sodden air.
The raindrops fell, slow dripping from the trees,
Like tears of anguish from a broken heart;
I could not see the daisies in the grass,
The purple mists of grief hung everywhere.
Beneath the “Bridge of Sighs” the water flowed
With dull and sluggish sound; no ripples broke
Its deadly surface; it was like despair.
I cast me down upon its stony banks
And prayed for death, but with the prayer
The place grew lighter, and my tear-filled eyes
Saw in the gloomy place a radiant form,
With hand outstretched and face of tenderest love.
A nail-pierced hand, and brow that once had worn
A crown of thorns. I knew that thrilling voice
That swept like music through the dripping trees
Like unseen harps touched by a heavenly band.
“I, too, have passed this way. I drank the cup
My Father gave that you might have the joy.
Then come with me up to the Heights of Love,
Where golden sunlight gilds the tears of grief
And changes them to jewels for a crown.”

The Pastor's Dream.

I had a dream—a wondrous dream,—
Methought the Christ again was here;
He walked and talked among us still.
With eager eyes I saw Him near.

But, ah! so old, so weak He seemed,
His beard was frosted o'er with snow;
Yet in those eyes of wondrous love
There dwelt a balm for every woe.

He cast on me that look of love;—
I felt a deep responsive glow;
I seemed to hear His "Follow Me,"
And followed in His footsteps slow.

I looked, and saw Him feebly climb
To where a "house" stood on a hill;
I knew it well—it was the home
Of sick and poor—I see it still.

"O Christ!" I cried, "for Thy dear sake,
The old and weak shall be my care;
And up the hill my way I'll take,
To cheer the sad and suff'ring there."

Long I had sought for some great thing
To do for Christ, my work seemed small;
But now I know what He would say—
"Do it for Me, thy will is all."

The Last Look.

One last, long look ere the grave seals up
Our dead till the judgment day;
The earthly garb of the soul we loved
Will soon be with the clay.

Oh, love! thou liest so pale and still,
The face love made so sweet;
No more I shall clasp your warm, true hand,
Or hear those eager feet.

With your peaceful face and folded hands--
Earth's joy and sorrow past,
The eyes that were wont to smile on me,
Alas! they have looked their last.

I shall meet no more that answering look
From the "windows of the soul";
They have closed for aye on earthly things,
And see the heavenly goal.

'Tis hard to place in the cold, cold earth
The form we loved—the shell;
To think of the lonely years in store,
Yet "He doeth all things well."

But the soul! ah! that is with its God,
From earthly bonds set free:
As the dove returned to the ark at last,
From that trackless waste of sea.

Not dead; but risen! that Easter song
Comes back with a glad refrain:
Yea, risen with Christ, who conquered death,
And weariness, and pain.

Christmas Eve.

In the firelight glow, as I sit dreaming
Of Love and Life, beneath its seeming
Bright angel forms before me rise,
And I hear that chorus from the skies
Which the shepherds heard, whose startled eyes
Showed terror mingled with surprise :

“Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men.”

“Fear not!” rings out a Voice assuring,
While sweetly swells that song alluring
Which came that night to simple men.
Ah! could we hear, as they heard it when
Pealing afar, o’er moor and fen,
Should we “leave our sheep” to follow, then?

“Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men.”

Should we have “time to waste” on its sweetness?
To hear the message in its completeness?
’Tis echoing down the ages yet.
Oh! pause awhile, lest we should forget
In our mirth, our toil, our sad regret
For faces missed, though eyes be wet:

“Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men.”

We may sadly think of bright eyes’ glances,
When troubles were not and walks were dances.
They are singing yet, that Heavenly throng,
This old, this world-wide, splendid song;
Earth’s night shall pass; it will not be long
Ere Christ shall reign all lands among.

“Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men.”

Though clouds may lower, the same sun shineth,
'Tis a thankless heart that aye repineth;
The clouds shall break, the sun shine through,
To touch the flowers with glorious hue;
Make some sad soul rejoice with you,
Resting upon this promise true:

“Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men.”

“Never.”

“The mill will never grind
With the water that has passed.”

“Never” is a high blank wall
At which we stand forlorn,
When from this life has passed some joy,
And night replaced the morn.

Behind this wall, so dark and cold,
No mortal eyes may scan;
'Tis wrapped in mists and darkness,
Beyond the sight of man.

We turn towards the gate “To Be,”
What doth the future hold?
What will the New Year bring to us,
Dull grey or glittering gold?

Ah! none can tell; the path reveals
But one step all the way;
An inner voice the silence breaks:
“Fear not!” it seems to say.

One day we have, one step we see,
The past returns no more;
Strive, then, to rise to nobler heights
Than in the days of yore.

Cast sloth away, and aye aspire
As speed the years away;
All time is lost that does not see
Self conquered day by day.

To My Dog.

Is it "cupboard love," I wonder,
That shines from those beautiful eyes?
Poor "Friskie" turns upon me
A look of sad surprise,

That asks, Have I forgotten
How she refused to eat
Because in a quiet chamber,
Far from the busy street,

I lay a sick-bed prisoner?
How she proved a companion true,
And bounded with joy when I ventured
Once more beneath heaven's blue?

And how one day she was punished
For something she did not do,
And meekly bore reproaches:
She could not speak, but she knew

That naughty puss was the culprit;
And when found out, ah! then
With what ready, joyous forgiveness
She bounded from her den.

No sulky dignity held her
A moment from my knee;
With eyes and tongue she was showering
Affection full and free.

Ah! dear little dog, you are wiser
Than I, with my gift of speech:
You can teach me many lessons,
Unknowing that you teach.

“Clasped Hands.”

“The memory of clasped hands.”

E. B. Browning.

“Be good, my boy,” a mother murmured low,
Clasping his hand in life’s last solemn hour;
And oft he felt upon his roughened palm
That fragile hand’s restraining power.

The widow, struggling on life’s lonely way,
Remembers yet the pressure of a hand,
And dreams of many a pleasant bygone hour
Wandering in Love’s enchanted land.

The lovers fondly think, with musing smile,
Of “golden silences” beneath the moon
When hands were softly clasped, and eye met eye,
And Love had reached its happy noon.

When old friends meet beneath an alien sky,
How warm the clasp then of a friendly hand :
With what silent eloquence it glows
When brothers meet on a foreign strand.

Weighed down by bitter grief too deep for words—
For even friendly words seem weak and poor,
We can only show then our sympathy deep
By friendship's clasp, and we need no more.

“ Hold Thou my hand !” the dying Christian cries,
As o'er his feet death's icy waters roll ;
O'er the chill features steal a look of rapture
With the last sigh of the departing soul.

“ There shall be no more sea.”

Rev. xxi., 1.

The sea divides—two hearts are sundered wide :
That shall not be up yonder ;
All those we love around us then,—
This vision sweet we ponder.

How calm and bright it looks, how heavenly blue,
White sails are speeding o'er it ;
Gay hearts keep love's own holiday,
And sorrows flee before it.

Uncertain life ! How true a type of thee—
One moment bright hopes crowning ;
The next, a raging whirlpool where
Our dearest hopes are drowning.

Dear God! In love and wisdom Thou hast made
 All earthly joys so fleeting;
 The fairest ships in life go down,
 But there all joys are meeting.

Our buried treasure's waiting for us there,
 No more to lose or leave us;
 No sin, no death shall enter in,
 The sea no more shall grieve us.

"My Guardian Angel."

Matt. xviii., 10.

Were I an artist, I would paint thy face,
 My Guardian Angel sweet,
 With looks of brooding love enwrapped,
 With swift and flying feet.

The love reflected from our Father's face,
 His "little one" to guide,
 And safely keep through stony ways
 And flowery meadows wide.

Those velvet meadows where delightful flowers
 Are blooming rich and rare,
 To show me in the stony clefts
 Where grow the flow'rets fair.

And when at last I see thee, Beauteous One,
 I feel that I shall know
 That look of brooding tenderness,
 And bright wings drooping low.

A radiant presence I have known for long,
Thy sweet low voice I'll hear,
And looking up will meet that look
Which casts out every fear.

The Captain of His Soul.

He stands serene, amidst the wreck
Of all that makes life gay;
Suspicion hurls at him her darts--
Smart things the gossips say.

With mind at peace, through outward war
He trusts in God's control,
And thinks with joy that He is still
The "Captain of his soul."

New friends are curt, old friends are cold,
The muttering thunders roll;
Where lightnings flash he stands unscathed
If "Captain of his soul."

And spite sees all her shafts fall short—
They cannot reach their goal;
For still through all her venom'd darts
He's "Captain of his soul."

Truth must come out, though hidden long,
Whatever gossips say;
And o'er his path, so chequered now,
Shall shine the light of day.

Hope on, brave heart, unheeding wrong--
Unheeding praises, too,
For praises from the fickle crowd.
Are short-lived as the dew.

Resting Time.

The busy stream of Life goes rushing on apace,
Adown the city street, the noisy mart, the mill,
And we are carried with it, faster, faster yet,
Until at last exhausted Nature claims a pause,
And Nature's God and ours says low and tenderly,
"Come ye apart, my children, rest awhile with Me."
Sometimes we weep, not knowing that it is the Lord,
For often 'tis the resting-time is spent at first
Within the four walls of a quiet shadowed room,
Where Love, which hides itself in rosy times of
health,
Creeps out, and all the anxious household brings
Its best and choicest offerings to our chamber door.
'Tis thus Christ lays His hand of grace upon our
heads,
As once He did while on this earth He also toiled;
He knows the stress and strain, He felt the dust and
heat.
"He knows our frame." He trod the city street of
life,
Thronged on all sides by suffering and despairing
ones,
Until His heart of love at times could well nigh
break,
And His poor human frame would long for rest.
E'en mid the throng He speaks, bidding us lift our
eyes

From rubbish-heaps of dross towards the crowns of
gold;
But we, grown dull with listening to the world's
harsh cries,
We heed Him not, or think it but an idle dream.
And so He leads us out, away from noisy crowds,
As once He led the blind man from the Jewish mart
Without the city gates, then touched his poor blind
eyes,
And first he saw the Saviour's yearning look of love,
And then the waving trees, the boundless azure sky
Before his fellow-creatures came into his gaze;
And now he runs to look at home, at kith and kin—
Most wonderful and strange was all he saw that day.
So we see wond'rous things when Christ has laid
on us
His healing touch. All things are new and beautiful.

Castleburgh Heights, Settle.

We climbed the rocky heights to-day,
Beneath, the smiling valley lay,
Idealised by summer sun;
The things of yesterday that jarred,
Faded and died—no longer marred
Our happy thoughts till day was done.

Things that we strive for seemed so small,
We marvelled that we cared at all,
The toilsome path as nothing seemed;
The silence drew our thoughts above—
The sun, pure as a mother's love,
Enwrapped us as we sat and dreamed.

Fair Women.

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem,
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.

Shakespeare.

I see Priscilla spinning, beside her cottage door,
Filling the fragrant air with tuneful melodies;
The noonday sun is falling upon her golden hair
And dainty cap of snowy white. The joyous birds
Are warbling, too, from leafy boughs of tender green.
Fair pilgrim maid! Far from her English home
she sang

Praises to God, who made the earth so fair a place.
Her woman's heart still clung to England's shady
lanes:

But there she might not sing, so here she chose to
stay,—

Nor, though bereft of kith and kin, does she look back.
I have a store of linen spun by such a maid,—
A Scottish ancestress whose memory I revere;
Her marriage plenishing in bygone days of old.
I never see it but I give a tender thought
To her whose nimble fingers long have been at rest:
It speaks to me of happy thoughts and high resolves,
For in the stillness she drew near to Nature's God.
We think of fair Evangeline in far-off Acadie,
Sad was her fate; but still the lessons learned in
youth,

Amidst such fair surroundings, bore their noble
fruit,
And in the home of suff'ring she found her love at
last.

The Fairy Prince.

How shall I know him? With careless feet,
Some day, perhaps, in the sunny street
I may idly look up, and our glances meet:

And with radiant eyes
And glad surprise
My heart has found its king.

Perhaps it may be in sorrow's path,
When joy seems but an aftermath,
And Love seems dead as last year's laugh:

Yet may I find
That Fate was kind
To give false joys a wing.

It may be on a dull, dark day,
When rain falls fast, and skies are grey,
That a sudden brightness falls this way,

And all things seem
Like a fairy dream—
The Fairy Prince has come!

And common things are glorified,
New beauties gleam on every side,
And earth has neither time nor tide:

The awakened soul
Has found its goal,
And Love has claimed its own.

So I must be ready to meet my king;
He must not find me a foolish thing
With idle flights on Fancy's wing,

And wishes vain
Of earthly gain,
Instead of noble deeds.

If "noble deeds" are for the few,
There are "little things" for all to do;
Some may have eyes of heavenly hue,
 With faces fair
 And sunny hair
While hearts are growing weeds.

For Joy and Sorrow walk hand in hand,
Even in that enchanted land
Of all I've dreamed and all I've planned:
 Yet in the gloom
 Sweet roses bloom,
All clouds are touched with gold.

And if my love be brave and true,
Then I must have those graces too
With a merry heart, no thoughts of rue:
 A busy hand
 At Love's command;
No haughty glances cold.

"Hath the Rain a Father?"

Job 38, 28.

These words came into my mind to-day;
My heart was sad, and all things seemed to say:
"The mist and rain have come to stay."

This thought came then and drove the others out,
Dispelled the clouds of anxious doubt,
And darker thoughts were put to rout.

The Coming of Love.

He came—she knew not that he came;
She only knew the skies were fair,
That birds sang sweeter than of yore,
And all things wore a joyous air.

Love's Departure

But now—the skies are overcast,
The rain falls dripping from the eaves,
The flowers of yesterday droop low,
The paths are strewn with fallen leaves.

Love's Return.

But hark! a well-loved step she hears;
What tho' the path be sodden ground—
Now leaden skies are tinged with gold,
The rain has lost its dreary sound.



“I shall be satisfied when I awake.”

When I awake! I shall behold Him—
The Lord of Love and Life;
Shall see with clearer, purer vision,
Away from sin and strife.

When I awake! the thought is rapture:
My earth-bound senses clearer grown,
Shall see with steadfast eyes undazzled
The Lamb upon His throne.

Resignation.

Dear Father-God, help us to tread with patience
The tangled path Thy wisdom hath designed,
Remembering One, Who, going on before us,
Pressed back the thorns for those to come behind.

If we are sure straight onward lies the journey,
The toilsome path may lead from hill to hill;
Yet even then we find our compensations:
A clearer view when yielding up our will.

So let it be; we bring our sins and follies,
Our cares and worries, and we leave them all;
Why should we longer bear the heavy burden
When Thou hast said, "I'll bear them, great and
small."

Loneliness.

The way lies long and dark before me now,
And I, alas! must walk companionless;
No sweet converse to brighten up its length.
It is myself I grieve for. Thou hast reached
That Promised Land, that ever glorious place
Where all Earth's brightest and most lovely flowers
Are blooming. There, within that richer garden,
All our dear lost and buried treasures
Are waiting for us; fairer, sweeter far,
That when we last beheld them—yet the same.
The same love shines in those dear, tender eyes;
Yet love that is refined and purified
From all our earthly dross and lower sense.

The Palm Tree in the Desert.

Majestic stood that stately tree;
The sun's fierce rays fell scorching there;
No grassy carpet met the eye,
All things around were dry and bare.

But well we knew some hidden spring
Watered its roots, and kept it green;
To cast its welcome shade around,
Although to stranger eyes unseen.

Oh! take, my heart, the lesson sweet;
We oft may learn from simple things:
Would we thro' fiery days keep green,
Our life must feed from living springs.

The Covenanter's Bible.

I read of kingly, noble deeds
They did in days of yore,—
Of Bruce and Wallace, brave and true;
Of these, and many more.

I hear the hoarse, wild battle cries,
The rival trumpets blow,
The horses' rush, the clash of steel,
I see the lances glow.

With bated breath I feel the shock
When men and horses meet,—
To fall, perchance, in "honour's cause,"
Or taste of victory sweet.

A morning glory gilds the scene,
But night must bring its woe;
And many a groan falls on the ear
As night winds come and go.

Dim shapes are searching here and there,
The flickering torch is seen,
Whose light falls bright on faces white
And armours' glittering sheen.

Poor steed! that knew not why *he* fell,
His death-cry fills my ears:
His master's hand is cold and stiff,
The night is full of fears.

I feel my very heart is stirred
By knightly deeds of old;
They fought for Scotland's liberty,
Untouched by love of gold.

But when I think of those who left
Their homes and all things dear,
Ah! then my heart within me burns,
I see the blazing bier

From which those heroes mount to heaven,
Their latest word a prayer,
Commending to their Saviour's hands
Their every earthly care.

And proud am I to be akin
To noble hearts like these,—
The thought is life-blood to my own,
Forbidding slothful ease.

Of one, I think,—he left his home
To fight for truth and God,—
This Book, sole treasure he had prized,
Though now beneath the sod.

He lies at rest for centuries past;
His memory's dear to me;
Nor fire nor sword could make him flinch,—
May I be true as he.

With reverent hand I turn the page,
While slowly reading there,
The leaf so frail and dim with age,
He hoarded with such care.

All honour to that Covenant,
To which they were so true;
For not alone the men stood there,
But tender women, too.

Dearer to them than lands or wealth,
Their faith shone bright and clear;
Steadfast they stood, and let life go
For what I'm holding here.

A May Morning.

“There's music in all things, if men had ears.”
—Byron.

Come to the woods with me,
And chant a merry measure
Of pure and guileless pleasure,
Beneath the beechen tree.

Oh! Come, come now with me,
The bluebells all are singing,
Anemones are springing
Upon the dewy lea.

Then, come where west winds blow;
There, primroses are hiding;
The merry streamlet's gliding
Has music in its flow.

Come, then, where hums the bee,
The little lambkin's bleating
With joy the morn is greeting,
To welcome you and me.

Come, sing a merry glee,
And sweetly piping o'er us
The birds shall join our chorus,
Beneath the new-drest tree.

Come to the woods with me,
For o'er the dewy mosses
The fern its tendrils tosses,
A-dancing in their glee.

The lark sings, "Come and see";
Swiftly the hours are fleeting,
All Nature seems repeating,
"Come to the woods with me."

"Gathered Gold."

"The heart that is soonest awake to the flowers
Is always the first to be touched by the thorns."

—Moore.

Dear one, could I but find the key
That would unlock your heart to me—
I might keep those feet from many a snare,
Of perilous paths bid them beware.

Youth will have none of "Gathered Gold,"
Far distant seems the barren wold,
When the morning skies are fair and blue,
The flowers are sparkling still with dew.

"Poison lurks in the poppies' breath"; ,
Some flowers we love are flowers of death;
And some are sweeter as Time rolls on,
Whose perfume stays when the bloom has gone.

With careless song and laughter gay,
Dreaming upon your heedless way,
What seems to you now green meadow grass,
You may find, perchance, a deep morass.

But, other hands must hold the key,
You're still a casket sealed to me;
'Tis not mine to guide your wayward feet,
Or in your heart to make music sweet.

And youth must take its own wild way;
Be taught by Time, with wrinkles grey,
The path to wisdom be wet with tears
For sorrows that crowd thro' darkened years.

Yet God still holds the master-key,
He cares for you so tenderly;
If in grief your eyes shall turn to Him,
His love will lighten the valleys dim.

How Long, O Lord?

(A Prayer for Peace).

How long, O Lord, how long?—
Shall war uprear his hateful head;
Shall plains be strewn with gory dead;
How long, O Lord, how long?

For still the cannons roar;
The hopes of peaceful hearts and warm
Have fled before the gathering storm:
Sweet Dove! return once more!

We *dare* not think. We *see*,
In dreams by night, dear murdered ones,
With face upturned upon the stones:
Lord, bid the vision flee!

O War! O cruel War!—
That with thy fierce, relentless hands
Doth tear aside the closest bands,
Thy sins as scarlet are!

What are thy signs, O War?—
A breadth of hostile land dyed red;
A band of gallant brothers dead—
These are the signs of war.

Upon the once green plain
A stifled groan; a long shrill cry;
A war-horse in its agony—
These sounds betray the slain.

How long, O Lord, how long?
Ere flags of peace again shall fly
From cottage roof and castle high?—
Grant that it be not long!

“An Ideal Man.”

An Ideal Man has courage true
The wrong to shun, the right to do;
With manners gentle and purpose high
To do some good before he die.

The Golden Rule is his, I ween,
He lives and moves beneath its sheen:
Aye ready to protect the weak,
Before his own, their good to seek.

Strong with the strength that goodness gives,
Not for himself his life he lives;
No weak staff he, or swaying reed,
But straight, and true,—a friend indeed.

But yet he pity finds for all
Who in Life's battle droop and fall:
He follows in his Master's path
And gives in love, “such as he hath.”

And should he ever swerve aside
From duty's call in wounded pride,
First is he to own and right the wrong,
And weakness makes him doubly strong.

A Spring Day.

Now comes the merrie merrie May,
The birds are singing, singing;
The very air seems glad to-day,
Wild flowers are springing, springing.

Happiest month in all the year,
No time for sighing, sighing;
When Nature's music soundeth clear
Homeward come swallows flying.

Even in busy, smoky town,
The sweet spring sunshine lingers,
And thro' the din comes floating down
Faint echoes of the singers.

So all thro' life, day follows night;
When life is dreary, dreary,
There comes a shaft of sunshine bright,
Reviving hearts a-weary.

And words of love, in wintry days,
May set the heart a-singing;
As thro' the "homely household ways"
Hope sends her bright thoughts winging.

It is bright—somewhere.

What shall we do when the Light is fled,
And all Earth seems dead?
Shall we idly sit down, and say "Don't care"—
Give way to despair?
Nay, nay, my soul, we will search wide and far;
If not the sun, we may find a star,
Its pale light to shed upon our head,
Tho' the mountain side be bleak and bare.
We must climb, and climb, it is bright—somewhere!

Good-night !

Good-night, beloved, thy sleep is deep and peaceful;
The lines that Time had written on thy brow
Have been smoothed out beneath Death's kindly
fingers,
All care is ended now.

Dear one, good-night; for thee the bright, glad
morning,
For me sad loneliness and darksome night;
Not yet awhile for me that glorious dawning
And entrance into light.

Good-night, beloved, a long farewell to sorrow,
And all the earthly joys and earthly cares,
And all the heart-sick longings that at seasons
Steal o'er us unawares.

Forgive these tears—I cannot help them falling—
That aching longing for a “vanished hand,”
For hours of sweet companionship now passing
Into the “Silent Land.”

Dearest, good-night. I would not grudge thy
sleeping,
’Tis rest well-earned; all joy and peace to thee;
Nor would I dim that joy the least by weeping,
If such a thing might be.

Good-night, beloved, I see the faint smile dawning
O'er thy dear features like an after-glow;
Methinks I hear the angels' song of welcome
In accents sweet and low.

Good-night, good-night, I fain would sit and listen
To catch the echoes of that heavenly song,
But earthly voices call so loud, insistent,
That will not wait for long.

In the long years to come, how I shall miss you!
The tender smile, those understanding eyes;
Shall hear no more thy gentle words of wisdom,
The love that in them lies.

Ah! if you can, I know you'll still be near me
When friends deceive and all my world goes
wrong;
Will still be near to guide and guard and cheer me,
When dark the day and long.

Rydal Falls.

The sound of the rushing water
Falls on my ear like a song;
And this is what it sings to me
As it dashes foaming along:

“Look up, sad heart, be comforted,
There are beautiful things to see,
In this sweet world of flower and song
There are beautiful things to be.

“’Tis a joy to live and be here
With ‘Hearts of Gold’ around;
While merry jest and laughter gay
Makes the still, soft air resound.”

'Tis a flower for "Mem'ry's Garden,"
To light up the twilight shade,
In that pleasant spot for evening hours
And evening walks I made.

An old-world place is my garden :
Where wallflowers and pansies blow,
Forget-me-nots, too, of heaven's own hue,
And sweetest roses grow.

There are rippling brooks, in quiet nooks ;
There are ferns and mosses there ;
And violets peep from under the leaves
With a shy and timid air.

I love to walk among them all,
And list awhile to their song ;
As they raise their heads to greet me
With joy as I pass along.

A shady place is my garden,
Where memories sweet will live ;
And as I dream along its paths
To friends a flower I'll give :

Sometimes 'tis early thrown away ;
Sometimes 'tis treasured and set
In other gardens, like my own—
I often find them yet.

A flower of gold I plant to-day
To brighten this fairy bower ;
For rain has fallen so much of late,
There seemed to be ne'er a flower,

Though plenty of sturdy green shrubs,—
Some things grow best in the rain.
(’Tis best in this world of ours, you know,
To have both pleasure and pain.)

The weeds! I’ll root them out again;
I only want fragrant flowers
To grow in this sweet spot of mine,
To cheer the dim twilight hours.

So its not “Good-bye,” dear waters,
I shall hear you often again;
In my quiet walks in the gloaming
I shall hear your sweet refrain:

“Look up, dear heart, be comforted,
There are wonderful things to see,
In this glad world of flower and song
There’s a place for you and me.”

May, 1904.

The Nightingale’s Song.

Oh! bird that ever haunts the loneliest place,
What makes thy midnight song so piercing sweet?
’Tis only in the dark we hear thy voice,
Far from the noisy tread of hurrying feet.

Thy sweetly plaintive notes float thro’ the dusk,
Exquisite pain and pleasure strangely blent,
All other voices in the wood are hushed
As if they, like ourselves, were well content

To yield the night to thee, and thee alone;
To list thy moving "melody of woe."
Oh, heavenly bird! we thank thee for thy song,
Which sweetly cheers us in our night below.

For in our darkest night, 'tis sometimes given
To hear a song, divinely soothing sweet;
And Hope's inspiring strain is heard again—
We seem to catch its eddying echoes fleet;

And not for all the joyous tones of earth
Would we forego these songs of tideless Time:
When earthly shadows fall o'er all the land,
Sweet notes we often hear of things sublime.

St. Valentine's Day.

I have heard, in days of "Auld Lang Syne,"
Cupid claimed this day for himself;
And everywhere this merry elf
Was helping to choose a valentine.

He used to be so busy that day,
Flying around, with ready dart,
To pierce the hardest, coldest heart,
And make it tender, gallant, and gay.

And birds their mates chose on that day,
Singing sweetly the trees among:
The air was full of joy and song,
And all were cheered who passed that way.

But in these days, alas! we see
The windows full of ugly things,
Foolish and coarse. Love droops his wings:--
"This isn't the day it used to be."

Now, wasn't it better in "Auld Lang Syne"?
Why drive the little rogue away?
Let us again give him the day,
And send off a merry valentine.

Dear little elf! How his eyes will shine
When friendly greetings pass once more;
Sweep malice and envy out at the door,
And kill them with Love's valentine!

Wall-flowers.

The sweet wall-flowers in their homely dresses
Adorn our garden-paths once more;
Each passing breeze their petals caresses,
And the birds seem singing "Grim Winter is o'er."

To the passer-by their fragrance flinging,
Even in crowded city streets;
To careworn faces some brightness bringing,
As the generous flowers send forth their sweets.

Ah! other flowers may be brighter, fairer,—
The lily with statelier grace may bend,
The rose's scent may be richer, rarer,
Yet the wall-flower comes as a dear old friend:

A friend that will stay when others leave us,
In its dear old dress of sober hue,
Like a trusty soul, when others grieve us,
With a helping hand and sympathy true.

So, long-loved flower, I must sing your praises
In country garden or city street,
With the gladsome lark who his song upraises
To the Giver of all things good and sweet.

And when is ended Life's voyage stormy,
And I calmly sleep in earthy bed,
May you, dear wall-flowers, then nod o'er me,
And over "God's acre" your fragrance shed.

The Grave of Love.

It was dead : so I buried it out of sight,
In the still darkness of the summer night;
I robed it in white, and gently laid
Its pale, still form in the leafy glade
Where I saw it first.

I buried it deep—deep down in the earth,
In the same green spot where it had its birth;
Dead things must always be buried so deep
That nought may disturb their last long sleep,
In the silent grave.

I planted some flowers on its grave one night;
Ere long they blossomed in purple and white.
So pure did they look, so sweet did they smell,
No one would guess what they hid so well
Was a dark, cold grave.

And birds sang sweetly as ever of yore,
And the place looked calm and serene once more;
As I passed it the other sweet Spring day—
A shaft of sunshine so brightly lay
 On its grassy face.

So fair did it look, I paused awhile,
And thought to myself, with a pensive smile:
How things had changed since I passed this way;
Then dark was the night, now bright was the day
 In the self-same wood.

One Summer Day.

Joy seems to fill each living thing:
The birds that dart on airy wing
And make the air with music ring,
 This cloudless summer day.

Before us stretch the shining sand,
The old grey ocean, vast and grand,
The sun's rays gilding sea and land
 With life and beauty gay.

The skies above of heavenly hue,
Seem dipping in the ocean's blue,
Hiding the distant ships from view,
 They seem to sink away.

And on my ear there falls a chime,
Echoed from Master-mind sublime,
Of "Footprints on the sands of Time,"
 Which yet may last for aye.

How oft in scenes of toil and pain
Shall come, like dew upon the plain,
In dreams, this glorious scene again,
Of one sweet summer day.

In the Garden.

“I slept, and dreamed that Life was beauty,
I woke, and found that Life was duty.”

I dreamed a dream. 'Twas in a garden fair;
I thought to choose the brightest, gayest flowers,
Radiantly smiling 'neath the morning dew,—
To wear them proudly for the world to see
And wonder at my joy and happiness.
But the Great Master of the Garden said :
“Not so, Dear Daughter, these fair flowers have
grown
For other hands to pluck them. Not for you
These flow'rets that now dance upon the breeze,
Whose bright hues catch the eye, and smiling say,
'Be blythe and gay, for all good things are yours.'
These have no root for you. Their beauty dies
In one brief night of Winter's biting frost
And nought is left but sighs and withered leaves.
Go, seek for sweeter flowers, with deeper roots,
Among the hedgerows. In the forest dark
They grow. The flower of sweet humility
A wondrous fragrance hath. Go, seek for it!
Though hidden, its own scent betrays its presence.
And other flowers you'll find in Earth's dark lanes,
On every hand they bloom; their fairy bells
Will quiver in the breeze when wintry winds

Sweep o'er the land. So choose the 'hardy flowers,
And their sweet scent shall brighten other lives;
But leave these rootless, bright-hued, scentless ones
For other hands than yours to pluck and wear."

I lingered still, for fair they seemed to me:
I thought that fairer surely could not be.
The hedge-row flowers looked mean to my young
eyes,

They could not charm me half so much as these.
I watched the busy crowd, with laugh and song,
Who plucked the beauteous flowers with joyous air,
And in my heart rebellious rose the thought,
"Why should I be denied, and told to search
For common hedge-row flowers? It is unjust!
None will I have, if these are not for me."
But as I turned away in bitter pride,
Lo! whispering sadly on the breeze once more
I heard the Master's voice: "Can'st thou not trust
My love and care for thee, Daughter of Mine?
If it were best, would I not give these flowers,
And grant thy youthful feet to walk awhile
In sunny sheltered paths? But 'tis not best,—
So seek for other flowers. Thou shalt find
Some fairer far than these. The path is rough,
But I will show the way, and bring thee safe
To thy desired place. Come! follow Me."
I followed then, with slow and lingering steps.
But my unwilling, tear-dimmed eyes could see
No beauty in the gloom; nor could my ears
Hear songs of joy from happy forest birds:
Their plaintive notes reminded me anew
Of joys which I was leaving far behind.
I saw the stones which cut my weary feet,

And felt the thorns that scratched my bleeding hands.

No melody was in my heavy heart
Although I followed where the Master led;
When, shyly peeping 'neath dark glossy leaves
I saw a gleam of light; and, stooping down,
I found a flower, so small, so purely white,
Whose perfume scented all the air around;
And from the cypress tree above my head
An unseen bird poured forth a strain of joy
That found an answering echo in my heart.
And then my eyes, to clearer vision grown,
A little further on, I caught a glint
Of purple. Searching there I found Heartsease.
And now the forest seemed to thrill with joy;
Sweet-throated birds did make high melody,
And thro' the arched cathedral of the trees
The golden sunbeams fell. The lonely place
Was bright with flowers, and "blossomed like a
rose."

PART II.

Once more I stood beside that Garden fair;
The setting sun shed light upon the scene.
But lo! the flowers hung trembling on their stems.
And sadness brooded o'er the place. I thought:
"Mine was the wiser choice. I left those flowers
And followed where the Master led. I found
Some fairer far, that never fade or die."
But looking down with pride upon my own,
I saw my sweetest one was drooping low.
With bitter cry I sought the Gardener,
Showed Him my flowers. "They need the dew," He
said,

And then He showed me where, unseen by me,
A poison flower upreared its stately head
Beside my spotless one. "Both cannot grow
In the same soil. *Which* wilt thou choose, Dear
Child?"

"I cannot choose;—Choose Thou," I cried with
tears.

And then, once more the world was wrapped in
gloom,

But sweet-voiced Hope sang clearly to me still:

"The Light will come again, the dawn is near."

And when the Sun filled all the world with light,

With eager eyes I saw my precious flowers

Sparkling with dew, and fairer than of yore:

The weed was gone. I knew the Master's hand

Had plucked and cast it far away from me.

"Our Atmosphere."

"Some folks" live in a selfish "atmosphere"—

Is it me? Is it you?

Dark, sunless and drear is the heart's cold soil,

With stunted shrubs, and with infinite toil

The pools they make grow stagnant and spoil

What might be verdant is withered and sere.

"Some folks" live in an "atmosphere" of love--

Is it you? Is it me?

And through the centre of this heart, some say,

Life-giving streams flow singing all the way,

Sweet-scented flowers are blooming every day:

Shedding sweet incense where they move.

But others of Envy and Hatred breathe—
Is it me? Is it you?
And cold Suspicion walks between these two
To petrify all good within their view—
To them Love itself wears no heavenly hue:
Where'er they pass, dissension they leave.

Some carry no anchor within their soul—
Is it you? Is it me?
And their lives are a mixture of all these three:
We never know which it is going to be,
They are ruled by emotion, and change like the sea,
And never get nearer their goal.

And so there are those who are never the same—
Is it you? Is it me?
Sometimes they make us feel buoyant and bright,
And open up vistas of endless delight,
And anon they plunge us in blackest night,
And make us feel "sorry we came."

"Ships that Pass."

It was only a casual meeting,
You smilingly bowed your head,
The conventional words were spoken:
"You were pleased to meet," you said.

Then just for a fraction of time, dear,
Your soul looked into mine:
And I had the oddest feeling
That in days of "Auld Lang Syne"

We had walked and talked together,
Though I knew that it was not so.
Did you feel the same, I wonder?
Perhaps I never shall know.

There are ships that pass on Life's ocean,
At night or in bright midday,
Just stay for a moment's greeting,
Then silently drift away.

Yet we know them better than some
We talk with year after year;
Our souls speak but once, then drift apart,
Still they seem more near and dear.

For that sacred "inner chamber"
Opens wide to just the few—
While the others throng its entrance,
That is kept for those we "knew."

The Waters of Marah.

Peace! restless heart, when waves of trouble roll
And threaten to o'erwhelm the sinking soul:
The giant hills hem in on every side,
No path is seen, for waves do not divide—
Look up, faint heart, and trust in God.

But when God's voice speaks to us—"Forward, go,"
Let us press on, nor let our steps be slow;
The waves our misty eyes see in their haste
Are but the mirage in the sandy waste—
Press on, dear heart, and trust in God.

And on the other side a song we'll raise,
For worthy is the Lord of joyful praise;
Till, once again, we make our pause beside
Life's bitter waters; yet our Heavenly Guide
Is with us still,—then trust in God.

For Israel's God can turn our bitter cup
To sweetness yet,—then bravely drink it up.
There is a purpose in His lightest word;
Our thankful hearts shall yet own that the Lord
Is good, is good,—have faith in God.

Let us, like Moses, when fresh troubles rise,
Look upward still, with steadfast, hopeful eyes,
Remembering mercies past, until we stand
Within the borders of the "Promised Land,"—
Sing then, glad heart, sing praise to God.

In Dull November.

Oh, dreary month of gloomy thought,
With many a backward memory fraught,
Happy the soul who takes as King
The Angel Hope, and still can sing:
Soon will be here the gladsome Spring.

The mist hangs over hill and dale
Enwrapped within its gloomy veil,
Our mind and heart take in its hue;
Be not downcast; remember, too,
Who can the season bright renew.

The winds sigh thro' the leafless trees,
And biting is the Autumn breeze,
Tho' Summer's leaves lie withering.
The birds fly low, with drooping wing,
'Twill storm awhile, and then comes—Spring.

Our lives have all November days,
Enshrouded seems the sun's bright rays;
But sunny days will come again,
And make the heart forget its pain,
Like Summer sunshine after rain.

A Friend of Mine.

That Light of Lights is on her face
That "never was on sea or land,"
Like Mary's, hers the "better part,"
And heart of love to understand.

The little children clutch her gown,
Their baby woes to tell and share;
They ever find a tender friend
And wealth of loving kisses there.

Her heart is tender to the weak,
She gently leads the erring feet;
By grace and sympathy divine
Her very faults seem virtues sweet.

Meek, yet with gentle dignity
She walks along her heavenward way.
Her heart is light, and clear her mind;
She sweetly mingles grave and gay.

And from those red lips never fall
An idle tale of sin and wrong;
The serious eye, the silent tear,
Will bid the weak again be strong.

The weary come their griefs to tell;
The joyful come their joy to share;
And each one finds sweet sympathy
To cheer the heart, and lighten care.

Sweet Lavender.

Who'll buy my flowers? Who'll buy?
'Neath a cloudless summer sky,
In a garden old they grew,
Kissed by sun, and wet with dew.

Who'll buy my flowers? Who'll buy,
Who my old-world scent will try?
Golden memories it will bring,
When Life and Love were in their spring.

Who'll buy my flowers? Who'll buy?
'Neath your pillow let it lie,
Then your dreams will all be gay
And joyous as a summer day.

Sweet lavender! Who'll buy?
Maiden fair, with dancing eye,
Mothers, too, with comely face,
In your homes t'will find a place.

In Pastures Green.

He leadeth me where pastures gleam,
To rest beside that living stream,
Where flowers of faith and hope are growing.

To walk the quiet waters by,
For every ill His help is nigh,
My cup with mercies over-flowing.

'Tis sweet to read at eventide,
To gain fresh courage at His side,—
With heavenly food my strength renewing.

Then, if to battle-fields I go,
Through desert plain, or winter snow,
His love is there, my heart bedewing.

When thro' dark ways He leadeth me,
My Guide and Counsellor is He,—
His strong right hand upholdeth ever.

And when in Death's dim vale I stand,
The palm of victory in my hand,
He'll help me cross that stormy river.

An Easter Thought.

In sauntering down the old familiar path,
Where years ago I had been wont to tread,
The birds' soft twittering in their tiny nests
Bear back my heart towards the quiet dead.

I ask: "Upon the Resurrection Morn,
When we and they shall rise again once more,
Shall we all know and love each other then?
Be friends, the same as in the days of yore?"

The same sweet flowers are sent us every Spring;
Not strangers, but the ones we know and love;
They rise from Winter's sleep to guide anew
Our hearts and minds to thoughts of Life above.

And so I love to think that we shall see
Our dead again,—the dear beloved friend
Whose longed-for face shall be the first to greet
Us in the after-life that knows no end.

And as I walk beside the hawthorn hedge,
My musing heart with solemn gladness fills,
As 'mid the boughs of dewy, budding trees
Some joyous, wooing bird his love-song trills.

Sing on! sweet happy bird, the Spring has come,—
Glad promised Time of hope for thee and me;
The Seasons never fail,—God never can;—
I, too, would sing my thanks as well as thee.

Friends for Life.

So we are friends for life,—Well, be it so.
I wished a dearer, closer tie;
But since that may not be, I can but bow
And say: I willingly would live and die
Thy Friend, thy life-long Friend.

Friends for life! There's sweetness in the thought,
Such friendship this as ne'er shall end;
My life shall be so spotless now that naught
Shall make thee blush to own thyself my friend—
My dear, my truest Friend.

I would that some day I to thee might prove
How deep my faithful friendship lies;
That deeper than the deepest love,
The friendship this that never dies,—
Thy Friend, thy faithful Friend.

Nay, do not sigh, dear Friend, I know that love
Cannot be born at our command,
And I shall ever live to prove
The proudest man in all the land:
To count myself thy Friend.

Farewell! Farewell! Dear One, when next we meet
We shall be friends for life;
Forget I ever sought thee, sweet,
To be my dearest wife,—
So shall we still be Friends.

The years pass on and on. They number ten
Since last I looked upon the face,—
To me the sweetest yet— and then,—
Those passing years have left small trace
On you, my dearest Friend.

Your earnest eyes—those “homes of silent prayer”—
Are bent on me in friendship still,
Looking untroubled on life's care;
The peace this world can never kill
Is yours, my sweetest Friend.

And I can meet those eyes serene, and say
That you my guiding star have been,—
A better man I am to-day :
I've weathered many a stormy scene ;
Your peace is mine, dear Friend.

God's Messenger.

“ Dear Heart,” she said, “ take courage still and trust ;
God reigneth yet o'er all the busy world :
His arm still stretcheth over land and sea ;
We are His children. He can still provide.”
“ He has forsaken us,” he answered gloomily ;
“ I have tried all that man can do, and failed.”
The tender voice went on once more, “ Dear Heart,
What is it He has said Himself to us :
' Though e'en a mother should forget her child,
Yet I will not forsake.' Could I forget
Our little Lucy here, leave her to starve
While I sat throned above in state and plenty ?
His messenger may even now be on the way.”
The little child stood by in wondering silence ;
But at these words she opened wide the door,
And then went rushing down the dusty street
To meet the postman on his evening rounds,
Who gave her with a smile the prayed-for letter,
Which she received with childish glee
And brought it to her father with the words :
“ Is this God's message to you, father dear ?”
The father opened it with trembling hands ;
Then with an awed and reverent look he said,—
“ The child is right—God's messenger to us
Has crossed the threshold of our home to-day.”

On a Flower.

Lines written on a Flower found in the hand
of a dead friend, and sent from America to
England.

Sweet faded flower! Thy earthly beauty,
The last her mortal eyes behold,—
She looketh now upon Heaven's glories,
She treads the streets of shining gold.

While we, with set and pallid features,
Live on with longing, empty hearts;
Ah! bitter is the pain of parting,
The burning tear unbidden starts.

Oh! friend so dear, thy parting message
Speaks to our hearts, so cold, so sad;
'Tis in this flower, once sweet and fragrant;
'Tis in thy smile, serene and glad.

For lo! within its petals written
Are seeds of life; thro' earth's dark crust
The young green shoots shall push its tendrils
Towards the sun from prisoned dust;

While I, in fuller life and beauty,
Shall rise my gracious Lord to meet,
With youth renewèd like the eagle's,
The Sun of Righteousness to greet.

Go, little flower, upon thy mission
To friends across the rolling sea,
To tell thy tale of hope and comfort,
God's holy messenger to be.

Grasmere.

Green are the distant hills, divinely fair
The trees' rich foliage. In their leafy lair
Sit the sweet singers of this paradise.
The gleaming beauty of the lake which lies
Surrounded by the rugged towering hills,
Whilst here and there are twinkling little rills;
'Tis like a pearl set in a velvet frame.
And up the hill, like seekers after fame,
I see the toiling climbers leave me far behind,
And like faint echoes sound their voices on the wind.

Distance Lends Enchantment.

"The hills look green that are far away,"
These words ring in my ears to-day;
But reached, we prove them brown and bare,
While the vale we left never looked so fair.
'Tis ever the feverish human lot
To vainly sigh for what we have not.

But on one green hill upon Life's plain
We find sweet rest from all our pain,
When on *its* summit we safely stand,
And view from it there the Promised Land.
" 'Tis well worth the toil and pain," we say,
" To see the things we can see to-day."

There, all our longings shall be fulfilled,
Our restless passions calmed and stilled.
Lord, Thou hast pity for human hearts,
Thou knowest the little pains and smarts,—
Then grant us now this peace to own,
To win the laurels of fair renown.

The Holy Land.

PART I.

Come, rest thy heart, and walk awhile with me
Upon the peaceful shores of Galilee;
A solemn air pervades the holy place
Which once beheld our Blessed Saviour's face;
That Voice divine to us has echoes yet
Which bade the humble fisher leave his net
To fish for men. Their erring souls to win
He bids us still to rise and follow Him.
The "little ships" lie anchored at the side,
And idly rock upon the quiet tide;
And as we gaze upon its waters blue
That calm and kingly voice is heard anew.
O'er Life's grim tumult may we ever hear
His "Peace, be still," and feel His presence near.

PART II.

And now, from storied plain to pillared height
Imagination takes her aerial flight--
Our clustering memories now are hovering round
The Temple City. 'Tis thrice holy ground:
Here stood the stately Temple's sacred walls
They built so silently. The scene recalls
That bye-gone time when Israel's Shepherd King
His people led, and sweetest songs did sing,—
Of sins repented of, and sins forgiven,
Of simple faith in God, and hope of Heaven.
Then Israel's wisest King next comes in view
Within our thoughts; he had his follies, too:
His great life-work that gorgeous Temple there,
And noblest words his dedication prayer.

Though many words he spake, both true and wise,
The Queen of Sheba heard with deep surprise
His ready answers to her questions sage.
Then, deeply rev'rent thoughts our hearts engage—
For here the Christ, *our* King, the Sinless One,—
Died for us all, and our redemption won.
Here is the sepulchre where Jesus lay;
The mem'ry pictures that bright, happy day
On which He rose. The women brought the news,
Glorious alike to Gentiles as to Jews,
On which our hopes of Heaven's bliss depend :
Believing this, our life shall have no end,
For when God calls us to our home of love,
We leave our cast-off clothes to soar above,—
To be with Him upon the Lord's right hand,
Amidst His ransomed host to take our stand.
The hallowed memories of the sacred past,
Around our rev'rent hearts their spell have cast,
For now, from out the shadowy twilight dim
Falls sweetly on the ear an evening hymn :—
Again our feet shall stand within Thy gates;
E'en now our eager, longing spirit waits
To tread Thy sacred courts, and once more see
The Lord's most high and Holy Majesty.”
The mystic spell is broken; with its flight
The Eastern daylight fades,—’tis sudden night.
No emblem this of our fair Promised Land.
When we in that *Eternal City* stand,
Our Lord has said, “There shall be no more night,”
“The Lamb once slain its glory and its light.”
What though the heathen Turk, with lordly tread,
Lifts high an unbelieving, scornful head :
Again, from out the deepening shadows dim,
We hear a joyful strain,—an Easter hymn,

“Not here, but risen.” Yea, risen indeed!
Our full atonement now with God to plead.
We long to join that grand immortal throng,
To stand that vast angelic host among,
Within our New Jerusalem!

PART III.

Our onward course we take in thought once more.
It leads us now to Joppa's grey old shore,
Where Peter had that strange and mystic dream:
“Despise not that as common, or unclean,
That *Gó*d hath cleansed. We look with keen delight
Upon the ancient town; with sunshine bright
Its marble roofs, with bright-hued gardens fair
Breathe fragrance on the scented, drowsy air.”
On “Simon's Roof,” we sit and muse awhile
Upon the scene. O'erhead, the blue skies smile,
The same eternal skies. The same green waves;
The same green, mossy stones the water laves.
As thus we sit and muse, the city's din
Dies from our hearts. We sit and drink it in
As Peter sat of old, before he slept,
And over his sealed eyes that vision swept.
Then, in his track along the old seashore,
On Fancy's waiting wings we onward soar
To where the “Good Centurion” and his band
(The “good salt” they in all that heathen land)
Await him there. Prepared hearts receive
The story of the Cross: with joy believe.
The fields are white, the Holy Ghost comes down
And with his “Gift of Tongues” doth Gentiles crown.

Fetters and Storms.

The captive lion, in his narrow den,
Looks on the crowd with blank unseeing eyes.
Is he dreaming now of the trackless wilds?
Is he watching again the red sun rise?

Full many a captive spirit fettered lies,
And of environment makes prison bars;
Prone on the earth, unconscious of their strength,
'Midst moving crowds, whose noise so rudely jars.

Upon the inward thoughts of "might-have-beens,"
The vain regrets for what has passed away,
Unthinking that the bars we meet and break
Are sent to lead us on to brighter day.

The tree that meets the keenest wintry blast
Is stronger than the sheltered shrub that grows
Within the sunny walls that ring it round,
Where rose and lily for its neighbour blows.

'Tis of the forest oak we build our ships,
Not garden shrubs, whose verdure charms the eye,
And many a blow and band of steel must be
Ere on the bosom of the deep they lie.

The winter storms that beat so in our lives
Are sent to give to us a deeper strength,
A clearer vision towards our fellow-men,
Till the full stature of the soul at length,

Gifted with life and beauty, white-sail'd wings,
Sails out with "orders sealed" to distant lands
Though many storms are met upon our way,
The ship securely rides when Christ commands.

Mother's Darling.

"What is my rosebud thinking of now?
Dreaming and smiling the livelong day,
With a little pucker on baby brow,—
Tell me your thoughts, dear little one, pray.

"What will you do when grown a big girl—
As big as mother, with work to do?"
"When I am big," tossing back a stray curl,
"I'll be like mother, and wait on you.

You shall sit in the corner and sew;
I'll make the dinner and dust the chairs.
Sometimes you'll play the music too,
While I run errands up and down stairs."

God grant it; dearie, in future days,
You remember all mother did for you,—
Her wakeful nights, and busy ways,
The many things that she loved to do.

Such tiny hands life's work to begin
For life's broad highway,—such baby feet.
God keep you, darling, amid the world's din,
Unspotted and pure, for service meet.

An Old Portrait.

Fair maid ! who lived so long ago,
What is thy history? Sad or sweet?
Did the cold winds of winter blow?
Or Life bring her joys to thy feet?

Did'st bear in life a noble part?
In that proud chin no weakness lies;
I seem to see a loyal heart
In that steadfast look in thine eyes.

Thy mouth is curved in Love's own bow,
Love, methinks, would not pass thee by,
Did he come with joy in his train,
Or a thorny rose? With a sigh?

Ah! None can tell; we only know
Long ago, in the same old world,
A maiden lived, and loved, and died;
In that "black barge" with sails unfurled--

"Three queens" have borne her far away
From all her loved ones, near and dear,
We hope, to happier realms than these,
Where heavenly songs fall soft and clear.

But whatsoe'er our life may be,
And whether fair or plain of face,
We may be strong, or vain and weak,
Yet on our world we leave some trace.

"Shall it be good or ill?" we say;
Shall the angels grieve or rejoice
When we for aye have passed away
Beyond reach of our hand or voice?

The Flight of Song.

A maiden sat singing beside her door;
She sang as she never had sung before;
Joy filled her heart, and filled her song,
As her clear notes fell and floated along.

On those who passed in the busy street,
Hurrying along with footsteps fleet,
The lilt of the song into some hearts fell,
And all that day did its music swell.

And the city man with "no time to pray,"
Thought, somehow, things went better that day;
A less careworn look stole into his face,
And a radiance filled the dusty place.

"After all, Life's short," he murmured low;
"I can do my best, and let the rest go.
Is it worth the struggle, and stress, and strain,—
Shall I lose my soul for earthly gain?"

Then a girl, going sadly upon her way,
Thinking "None have a smile, or a word to say;
How lonely am I!" heard the happy voice,
Which seemed to be saying, Rejoice! Rejoice!

Felt the day grow brighter, from self beguiled.
As she went along, she even smiled.
And someone passing smiled in return:
For "Life is a mirror." This truth we learn.

If you wish your friends to be straight and true,
They are sure to expect the same from you;
And as we pass along Life's street,
If smiles we give, then smiles we meet.

And the maiden, singing, never knew
That her song in widening circles grew:
That it touched the lives of many more
Than those who chanced to pass her door.

My Wish.

I do not long to scale the heights of fame,
And on its towering summit write my name;
I'd rather live even in one true heart,
Filling my niche within Life's busy mart:
That so, perhaps, when laid in dreamless rest,
Of me it may be said, "She did her best
To do the things a-near, not seen afar,—
No glowing sun, but just a tiny star."



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